

## **“We Are Founded on Jesus Christ!”**

08-24-14

A fourth-grade teacher was giving her pupils a lesson in logic. "Here's the situation", a man's standing up in a boat in the middle of a river, fishing. He loses his balance, falls in, and begins splashing and yelling for help. His wife hears the commotion, knows he can't swim, and runs down to the bank. Why do you think she ran to the bank?" A girl raised her hand and said, "To draw out all his savings!"

Open to Matthew 16. This is the situation we find the disciples in as they are walking with Jesus, and Jesus asked them a question. He asks, *"Who do people say the Son of Man is?"* The disciples, just like the girl in the story, want to make sure they give the right answer! Verses 13-14, *"Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say that the Son of Man is?' And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.'"*

If you conducted a *"Man on the Street"* and asked the same question about Jesus, what do you think people would say? Some would say, *"Teacher"*. Some would say *"Miracle-Worker"*. A few might say, *"Son of God"*. But unfortunately, many times I think you'd hear, *"Who's Jesus?"*

But Jesus wants to know exactly who the disciples think He is. This is where Peter steps in. Verses 15-16, *"He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Simon Peter replied, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.'"* Only one of them had any kind of an answer for Jesus. The rest just stood there and looked at Him. They flat out didn't know what to say.

You see, it wasn't so much about knowing who or what Jesus is. It was about knowing Jesus! There's a big difference! Peter had been around Jesus long enough to figure it out. His answer didn't come from his head, but from his heart. Look at Jesus' response in verses 17-18, *"And Jesus answered him, 'Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.'"*

Peter confesses Jesus as the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of God, and from this confession, he's given the keys to the kingdom, and the rest of the church will be built upon his faith. Our church today is testimony to Peter's faith. It exists because Peter and others like him, trusted and believed in God. This is in spite of hostility and persecutions. The true church is founded on Jesus Christ alone! Talk about a powerful expression of grace and power!

If Jesus asked you, "Who am I to You" what would you say? Would you say He is my Lord. He has power over me and is above me? He is my Savior. He

came to earth to suffer and die in my place for my sins. He is my Redeemer. Because of what He's done for me, I have new life. He is my friend. He promised me He would always be with me, and He's never let me down!

We are literally gathered here this morning as a result of this Peter's expression of faith from 2000 years ago. His faith is the rock the church has been built on, and, it was imparted to him during his confession to Jesus. So, here we are, on the other side of the world, 2000 years later.

Many of us who are active in the church and want to see it grow, sit around and wonder, What's it going to take? What do we need to be doing? What kind of programs do we need to start?

Folks, what God needs from us in order to build His church hasn't changed from the days of the first Apostles. The foundation's the same. It's not about change, it's about strength and consistency! So what's our role as a church?

God asks of us that we come to know Jesus. It's more than knowing about Him, we just need to know Him for Who He is! He wants us to love him, to allow Him the opportunity to love us back. He wants us to have a relationship with Him!

We need to grow in our faith. The only way we can grow is to be in His Word and prayer each and every day. We need to ask the Holy Spirit to fill us with His presence and guide and lead us. It's not enough for us to sit in the pew and watch! We need to be an active part of the church, not asking why something isn't done, but instead asking, "How can I help?" We can't be content to just warm a pew but put a smile on our face, greet the people in church and look for ways to serve and show our faith.

We need to proclaim Him as Messiah in our own lives. Because of what Jesus Christ has done for you by dying and rising, you're different than you were before. He's changed you and called you His own in the waters of Baptism. He shares Himself in His Body and Blood, given and shed for you!

We need to share the Good News with others. If we want to see our church grow - God's church grow, we're going to have to be more intentional about sharing Jesus and His love with the people around us. We need to just have an honest sharing of the relationship we have with Jesus and what He's done for us as we're founded on Him! Talk about Jesus. Guide them to Jesus! Live Jesus!

May that be your goal in life each day and when Jesus looks at you and asks, "*Who do you say that I am?*", may you reply with all boldness and confidence, "*You are the Christ, the son of the living God*". To Him Alone Be the Glory!